

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 088108

63

ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011

DRAFTED BY S/S:FVORTIZ:GK

APPROVED BY S/S:ORTIZ

----- 039455

P 122341Z APR 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 088108

NODIS

FOL REPEAT DAMASCUS 2219 SENT ACTION SECSTATE APR 12

QTE

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 2219

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, US, SY

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION

REFS: (A) STATE 087620 (B) DAMASCUS 2118

1. SYRIAN TROOP AND ARMOR MOVEMENTS TOWARDS AND  
APPARENTLY ACROSS THE LEBANESE BORDER ON THE  
NIGHTS OF APRIL 9 AND 10 ARE AN OPEN SECRET IN DAMASCUS  
AND OBVIOUSLY BEING CAREFULLY FOLLOWED IN ISRAEL.  
GOAL OF THESE MOVEMENTS CONTINUES IN MY OPINION TO BE  
EXERTION OF PRESSURE, PSYCHOLOGICAL BUT IF NEED BE MILITARY,  
ON THE MUSLIM LEFTISTS IN LEBANON AND ON ALL LEBANESE  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 088108

POLITICIANS TO KEEP THE POLITICAL PROCESS MOVING

AHEAD.

2. YOU ASKED IF REF (A) PARA 4 HOW WE MIGHT BEST RELATE TO THESE SYRIAN GOALS. IN SO COMPLEX AND FAST MOVING A SITUATION, I HOPE OUR PUBLIC POSTURE WILL CONTINUE TO BE THAT ADOPTED BY THE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS THAT WE ARE NOT IN POSITION TO CONFIRM THE VARIOUS REPORTS OF SYRIAN MILITARY MOVEMENTS AND OF CLASHES INVOLVING EITHER SAIQ OR SYRIAN REGULARS, ON THE ONE HAND AND THE MUSLIM LEFTISTS ON THE OTHER. (IN THIS CONNECTION IT WOULD BE NICE IF PENTAGON "SOURCES" COULD ALSO BE KEPT BUTTONED UP.) SYRIA CONTINUES MAINTAIN TOTAL SILENCE ON SUCH CLASHES AS WELL AS ON ITS TROOP MOVEMENTS. THE TIGHT CONTROL ASAD HAS EXERCISED ON OUR EXCHANGES CONCERNING LEBANON, SIGNALS HIS INTENTION TO MAINTAIN ABSOLUTE SILENCE ABOUT OUR CONTACTS. ON BALANCE I CONSIDER THAT SUCH SILENCE IS ADVANTAGEOUS TO ALL CONCERNED.

3. ANOTHER FACT WITH WHICH WE MUST DEAL IS THE SYRIAN DETERMINATION TO HAVE A "SYRIAN VICTORY" IN LEBANON. THE REGIME CANNOT ADMIT TO HAVING RECEIVED ANY HELP FROM THE USG IN REGULATING AN AFFAIR WHICH IT STOUTLY MAINTAINS SHOULD CONCERN ONLY THE "ARAB FAMILY" AND PARTICULARLY LEBANON/SYRIA. HACKLES ARE RAISED HERE BY THE TYPE OF ARTICLE REPORTEDLY CARRIED BY "WASHINGTON STAR" A FEW DAYS AGO, REVEALING (ISRAELI RADIO VERSION) THAT THE USG HAD WORKED OUT AN AGREEMENT WITH ISREAL GOVERNING THE ENTRY OF SYRIAN FORCES TO LEBANON. IF TALK OF A US ASSIST IN LEBANESE CRISIS IS UNACCEPTABLE, THE IMPLICATION OF SYRO-ISRAELI COLLUSION IS OF COURSE INTOLERABLE TO THIS REGIME. (THE ISRAELIS HAVE SINCE DENIED THE STORY, WHILE DAMASCUS HAS PRESERVED A STONY SILENCE ABOUT IT.)

4. IF THE LEBANESE FAIL TO MOVE QUICKLY TO SELECT A NEW PRESIDENT, INCREASED AND MORE OVERT SYRIAN MILITARY MOVEMENTS COULD FOLLOW. THIS COULD IN TURN CARRY A HIGH RISK BOTH OF ISRAELI MILITARY REACTION AND OF FURTHER DETRACKING THE LEBANESE POLITICAL PROCESS. SYRIA UNQUESTIONABLY WOULD HOPE TO AVOID EITHER RESULT BUT WHAT WE MUST CECKON  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 088108

WITH IS ITS DETERMINATION TO PLAY THE KEY OUTSIDE ROLE IN MOVING THE LEBANESE POLITICAL PROCESS AHEAD. IT HAS THE CAPABILITY TO DEPLOY SIGNIFICANT MILITARY AND POLITICAL ASSETS IN SUPPORT OF SUCH A ROLE. I SHARE DEAN'S RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE CLUMSINESS WITH SHICH SYRIA HAS BEEN HANDLING JUMBLATT. BUT OFF HAND I CANNOT IMAGINE A MORE COMPLEX POLITICAL PERSONALITY THAN JUMBLATT NOW OPERATING IN THIS REGION AND I AM RELUCTANT TO SECOND GUESS SYRIAN

TECHNIQUES FOR DEALING WITH HIM.

5. ISRAELI REACTION:

AS LONG AS USG REMAINS CONVINCED THAT SYRIAN SIGHTS ARE FOCUSED JUST ON TAMPING DOWN THE EXPLOSIVE POTENTIAL IN BEIRUT AND ON EXTRICATING THEMSELVES MILITARILY FROM LEBANON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, IT SEEMS TO ME WORTHWILE TO PLAY A BIT OF A GAME OF MIRRORS WITH THE ISRAELIS IF NECESSARY TO KEEP THEM CALM AND STANDING DOWN.

WE COULD NOTE TO ISRAELIS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT SYRIAN MILITARY TERMINOLOGY IS A SLIPPERY AFFAIR. PERHAPS THE SINGLE MOST ELASTIC TERM IS "BRIGATE" (ARABIC "LIWAA") WHICH MAY HAVE FROM TWO TO FIVE BATTALIONS, THEREFORE RANGING FROM AS FEW AS EIGHT HUNDRED TO AS MANY AS FOUR THOUSAND MEN. DEPENDING ON ITS COMPOSITION, A BRIGADE MAY HAVE A NON-COMBATANT COMPONENT OF AS MUCH AS THIRTY PERCENT OF THE TOTAL. COULD ALSO QUERY POSSIBLE MISIDENTIFICATION BY IDF OF SYRIAN EQUIPMENT. (DIA CABLE 9999, DTG 1103212 REPORTED SIGHTING TANKS WITHIN LEBANON 10 APRIL BUT OMITTED CITING PRESENCE OF ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS OF TYPE WHICH CAN BE CONFUSED WITH TANKS AND WHOSE MOVEMENT WAS WITNESSED BY DAMASCUS DAO 188 APR 76 DTG 121212.)

6. UNDOF. WE HAVE NO CRYSTAL BALL WITH WHICH TO PREDICT WHEN SYRIA MAY WITHDRAW SUCH REGULAR UNITS AS IT MAY HAVE IN LEBANON OR RETURN TO BASE THOSE NOW IN POSITION ALONG THE BORDER. I SUGGEST, HOWEVER, THAT THE MILITARY DECISION TAKEN IN DAMASCUS LAST WEEK TO DEPLOY THESE TROOPS POSSIBLY LAUNCHED A PROCESS WHICH WILL BRING SYRIA TO RENEW THE UNDOF MANDATE NEXT MONTH WITHOUT MUCH ADO. ITS INVOLVEMENT TO SAVE "LEBANESE ARABISM" MAY HAVE PROVIDED IT WITH A GOOD ENOUGH JUSTIFICATION TO RENEW JUST AS THE "IRAQI THREAT" OF SPRING 1975 PERMITTED

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 088108

ITS RELATIVELY LOW KEYED RENEWAL LAST MAY.

7. SUGGEST PASS TO BEIRUT.

MURPHY  
UNQTE  
KISSINGER

SECRET

NNN



## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, INTERVENTION, TROOP DEPLOYMENT, CAT-C, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, FORCE & TROOP LEVELS, GOVERNMENT REACTI ONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 12 APR 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** saccheem  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STATE088108  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** FVORTIZ:GK  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** N760003-0206  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 2  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760470/aaaachxd.tel  
**Line Count:** 160  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN NODS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** NODIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** NODIS  
**Reference:** 76 STATE 87620, 76 DAMASCUS 2118  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** saccheem  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 05 FEB 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <05 FEB 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <17 AUG 2004 by saccheem>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** LOCK1  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** LEBANESE SITUATION  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PINT, MPOL, LE, US, SY  
**To:** BEIRUT  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006